

more important than oil or any other item. It is water that human beings need. Certainly the OPPD facility can take additional water out of the Missouri River. But as you well know, the Missouri River, when you take that water, there is high price to pay for the purification of that water. This morning this body wasn't too concerned when Senator George had a proposal here for \$48,000 when it related to contamination by nuclear facilities. What I'm saying to you today is that the transmission facility to the Saunders County water bed is the most economical. That water has the greatest integrity in terms of its uses for people. Not only that, but no one can prove to me that that water field will indeed take away from the flow of the Platte River. We allow 6 million cubic acres of water in this state, annually, to escape us. It doesn't seem to bother us very much. Instead of getting to the issue of retaining the ground surface water, we sit in this body on many occasions and do nothing about it. I submit to you that the issue of water in this state is total. That by these water fields in Sarpy County counting on this area to the Omaha metropolitan area which serves, I said, a half a million people approximately by service, it is imperative that these people have good water, that they have water which is accessible without endangering those who farm in Saunders County or those who live upstream on the Platte River. If we're concerned about who is taking water out of the Platte River, and the underground recharge, then we ought to be concerned about the riparian rights as well. Those who irrigate above from the Platte River without any type of monitoring may be also involved in the misuse of water which causes a lack of recharge at the far end of that river. I would suggest that OPPD's water fields are not going to delimit the water table one iota. Those hydrologists who have looked at it have virtually confirmed that the amount of water taken out of there, under present conditions, could hardly be noticeable in terms of the effect of the water table in that particular county. I would remind you of one other thing. Presently, in this area that we're talking about there is a great deal of development in gravel mining. This, of course, is an important industry. But by the same token, gravel mining takes away from the use and utilization of a good water table for human consumption. If we continue to try to deter the action of one of the largest sectors of our population in terms of water needs, and continue to confuse the issues, then the gravel development in this area is indeed going to be in place, and it will also take land and water in equal quantities. The same people who talk about taking land out of cultivation do not care about taking gravel from the same area and developing it into lakes, later on to become lake homes and other types of developments. This, of course, is a part of free enterprise. I understand it. But I think the issue must be made clear here today. Presently OPPD is taking water from the Missouri River. But in order for them to take additional water they would have to come through a major metropolitan area, that is high transmission cost because of all the residential areas, the streets, and a number of other problems besides the purification of the water. I do not perceive that this water field at this time will in any way, shape or form endanger the underground water supply of Saunders County or those who depend upon agriculture and agri-business as their life line for economic purposes.

PRESIDENT: Senator Mills.